

In the Specification

Please amend the second, third, and fourth paragraphs on page 3, as follows:

The intermediate elements preferably comprise fingers extending preferably in uniformly spaced-apart relation, parallel to the conveying direction of the first conveyor belt. Back parts of the fingers ~~can then~~ form a combgrid-shaped part of the slide-over surface at the entry of the gap between the first conveying surface and the second conveying surface. With the aid of such a combgrid-shaped slide-over surface, not only can products be supported during slide-over, but also the entry of larger dirt entities into the gap can be prevented, while smaller dirt entities can be discharged between the fingers via the gap. This is specifically important with modular mats, since in the case of such mats the gap size between the first and the second conveyor varies. In such a modular conveying mat, the mat, when passing around the chain wheel, forms a rotating polygon whose angular points may jam dirt entities in the gap. Especially in the case of modular mats from plastic material, where abrasive pollutions, such as glass frits, may get stuck, considerable damages may be prevented by the grid formed by the fingers.

The slide-over surface may then be built up from a substantially closed part of the supporting surface, with the combgrid-shaped part contiguous thereto, ~~as with a comb or finger-plate~~.

Naturally, the slide-over surface can also be made of fully combgrid-shaped or fully closed design. In the case of a fully combgrid-shaped slide-over surface, the intermediate elements can be formed by loose fingers.

Please amend the second and third paragraphs on page 4, as follows:

A further advantage of ~~intermediate elements designed as fingers, or provided with fingers~~, is that the fingers ~~can~~ cooperate with grooves in the surface of the first conveyor belt, extending in the conveying direction. The fingers are ~~then preferably~~ provided with a first back part which extends from the second conveying surface into the first conveying surface. In this way, the products can be readily moved from the first conveying surface onto the slide-over surface. Furthermore, in a similar manner, any larger fouling entities can be taken from the first conveying surface, and be discharged via the slide-over surface. Also, as a consequence, the intermediate elements can optionally be supported on the first conveying surface. The grooves in the surface of the conveying mat can for instance be formed by slots in a substantially flat surface of the conveyor belt, but may also be formed, for instance, between upstanding ribs on the surface of the conveyor belt. The walls and the bottom of the grooves may be staggered or even be locally interrupted.

It will be clear that in such an arrangement the slide-over surface formed by the backs of the fingers ~~may~~ overlap with the first conveying surface. Furthermore, it will be clear that the non-overlapping part of the slide-over surface forms a stationary, "dead" area. To prevent the possibility of products remaining behind on this slide-over surface when the conveyor belt is running empty, the length of the slide-over surface between the first conveying surface and the second conveying surface in a first conveying direction is preferably made smaller than the minimum dimension of the base of the product to be conveyed.

Please amend the first full paragraph on page 6, as follows:

In a further advantageous embodiment, the ~~intermediate elements comprise fingers which are~~ groupwise connected with a central carrier. In that case, the central carrier together with the fingers can ~~form a comb, which can be~~ replaced as a unit. Also, the fingers may be connected to the central carrier such that they are each separately detachable. The fingers can then be secured to a support, directly or by way of a central carrier. What can thus be achieved is that a finger can be replaced as a separate unit.

Please amend the first full paragraph on page 8, as follows:

The first conveyor belt 3 and the second conveyor belt 7 are in transverse mutual alignment, thereby including a gap-shaped interspace 10. Arranged in the interspace 10 are intermediate elements T, ~~comprising designed as~~ fingers 11, which bridge the gap 10 between the first conveying surface 5 and the second conveying surface 9. The intermediate elements T are of comb-shaped design and comprise a central carrier 31 with fingers 11. The central carrier 31 defines a substantially flat, closed part V of the slide-over surface, while the back parts of the fingers form a ~~comberid~~-shaped part R of the slide-over surface.

Please amend page 9, as follows:

A product 16, in this exemplary embodiment a bottle, moves along the path indicated by the arrow P3 over the conveying path formed by the conveyor belts 3, 7 and 12. The products 16 are supplied in the first conveying direction P1 and are moved along a guide 17 from the first conveying surface 5, via the ~~combed~~grid-shaped part R of the slide-over surface 22 formed by the back parts 26 of the fingers 11, and the closed part V of the slide-over surface 22 formed by the central carrier, onto the second conveying surface 9. By the use of the fingers 11, the longitudinal edge 18 of the second conveyor belt 7 is protected, while further the falling over of products 16 is prevented. To avoid the possibility that products, when the conveyor path is running empty, remain standing on the slide-over surface 22, the length of the slide-over surface 22 between the first conveying surface 5 and the second conveying surface 9, viewed in the first conveying direction, that is, in the direction of arrow P1, has been chosen to be less than the minimum dimension of the base 23 of a product 16 to be conveyed. Optionally, any products that remain standing on the slide-over surface 22 can be pushed on in a mechanical manner, for instance with an arm or with a vibrating device.

Upon arrival at the second conveying surface 9, the products 16 are moved further via the guide 17 onto the third conveying surface 13 of the third conveyor belt 12. Because the second conveyor belt 7 and the third conveyor belt 12 run in the same direction, the gap-shaped interspace ~~1019~~ included between the second conveyor belt 7 and the third conveyor belt 12 can be very narrow, thus avoiding problems of damage to the longitudinal edge 15 and products falling over.

It is noted that the ~~combed~~grid-shaped part R of the slide-over surface 22 may link up directly with the second conveying surface 9. The central carrier 31 or the finger 11 may then continue under the second conveying surface 9; in that case, the closed part V of the slide-over surface 22 is not present.

Please amend the last two paragraphs on page 11, as follows:

The fingers 11 are plate-shaped and extend next to each other, upstanding, equidistantly spaced, parallel to the first conveying direction P1. Back parts 26 of the fingers 11 form a ~~comb~~grid-shaped slide-over surface 22 at the entry 27 of the gap 10.

The fingers 11 cooperate with grooves 28 extending in conveying direction P1 in the surface of the first conveyor belt 7. The slide-over surface 22 formed by the back parts 26 of the fingers 11 overlaps the first conveying surface 5: the fingers 11 reach into the first conveying surface 5. The fingers 11 are provided with a further back part 28 which has been formed to